

IN THE CLAIMS

Please CANCEL claims 2, 3, 5-7, 11-14 and 23-42 without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein.

Please AMEND claims 15, 18 and 20, as follows. For the Examiner's convenience, all claims currently pending in this application have been reproduced below:

1-14. (Canceled)

15. (Currently Amended) A transport apparatus which transports a mask with a pellicle having a vent hole which brings an external space and a pellicle space between the pellicle and the mask into communication with each other while holding the ~~master~~ mask with the pellicle by a transport hand, said apparatus comprising:

a closing mechanism which closes the vent hole while holding ~~a reticle~~ the mask with the pellicle by said transport hand.

16. (Canceled)

17. (Original) A device manufacturing apparatus comprising:

a transport apparatus as defined in claim 15; and

an exposure section which transfers a pattern onto a substrate using a mask with a pellicle which is transported by the transport apparatus.

18. (Currently Amended) A transport method of transporting a mask with a pellicle having a vent hole which brings an external space and a pellicle space between the pellicle and the mask into communication with each other, said method comprising:

a step of transporting the ~~master~~ mask with the pellicle while purging the pellicle space with an inert gas using the vent hole.

19. (Previously Presented) A transport method of transporting a mask with a pellicle having a first vent hole and a second vent hole which bring an external space and a pellicle space between the pellicle and the mask into communication with each other, said method comprising:

a step of supplying an inert gas into the pellicle space through the first vent hole, and transporting the mask with the pellicle while sucking the inert gas from the pellicle space through the second vent hole.

20. (Currently Amended) A transport method of transporting a ~~master~~ mask with a pellicle having a vent hole which brings an external space and a pellicle space between the pellicle and the mask into communication with each other, said method comprising:

a step of closing the vent hole; and

a step of transporting the mask with the pellicle while closing the vent hole.

21. (Canceled)

22. (Original) A device manufacturing method comprising:

a step of transferring a pattern onto a substrate coated with a photosensitive agent using a device manufacturing apparatus as defined in claim 17; and
a step of developing the substrate.

23-42. (Canceled)